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SYMINGTON

## Editor Says, "I've Got It" But He Hasn't

Opposite Sen. Stuart Symington's defense secret intelligence on Russian missile strength dubious, and the senator knows it.

But Symington is in the running for Democratic nomination for the presidency, and is subject to that master's power. He's not above getting political advantage out of the defense question.

This is not to discount the service Senator is performing as the devil's advocate on matters of national security. As a former Secretary of the Air Force and an expert on defense issues, this man from Missouri can ask some probing questions that can help prevent the American people from being hoodwinked on how strong we are militarily.

In this running appraisal of American and Russian military strength, it is well to know what military intelligence is. It is more than raw information. Useful intelligence is information that has been evaluated and collated alongside other known facts about a potential enemy. Finally it is information that has been disseminated and placed in the proper hands so that it can be put to the most good.

A democracy faces a tremendous challenge over the issue of how much intelligence information the people are to be trusted with. If citizens are to be able to make wise decisions in their own behalf they must have the facts to help them in that decision-making.

Obviously, though, in the field of military matters a line must be drawn somewhere on making information public, for disclosure of too much could endanger the national safety.

No thoughtful citizen wants information that would jeopardize the national interest. At the same time this attitude can be exploited and be used to cover up mistakes by those in authority.

During World War II, the American press showed that it was mature enough not to reveal information that would be damaging to national security.

Now we are engaged in a cold war, rather than a hot one, and the issue of secrecy boils anew. Secrecy or the surprise element is one of the principles of warfare, an active one or the pseudo-combat we are now engaged in.

What makes Symington's threat ridiculous is that once a secret goes beyond its point of origin it no longer is a secret. So if he has, from the CIA or some other source, what is supposed to be secret information, it no longer deserves that description.